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DE RUEHAE #0020 0141018
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FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA
TO RUEHC/SECTATE WASHDC 9383
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI 0132
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1570
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1748
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 0091
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEPADJ/CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0691
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LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/13/2018
TAGS: [EAIR](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [ER](#) [SU](#) [XW](#)
SUBJECT: SUSPICIOUS NASAIR

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for reason 1.4 (d)

11. (C) An Asmara-based European ambassador told the ambassador January 11 that Nasair, a relatively new and shadowy airline based in Massawa, Eritrea, is owned and controlled by Sudanese intelligence. Nasair, which operates scheduled flights to Kenya, Sudan, Chad, and UAE, is a registered Eritrean airline, although it appears to be a subsidiary of an unknown UAE-based entity. The European ambassador, who is something of an airline buff, says the 1975 vintage 737-200 owned by Nasair is operated and reasonably well maintained by Russian crews. He added that he has flown Nasair several times and would do so again.

12. (C) Nasair flights often have only a handful of paying passengers, leading observers to question its commercial viability. Embassies recently in Massawa failed to secure an appointment with Nasair officials and were denied by Eritrean authorities a requested orientation visit to the newly refurbished Massawa International Airport, which currently handles no regularly scheduled commercial flights.

13. (C) Post would appreciate from addressees any additional information on or experience with Nasair. Several other African countries also have registered airlines called Nasair, according to some airline databases. Are they related?
MCMULLEN